

that I have consulted. The subcortical habit—though not that of aggregation—is reminiscent of its smaller and less striking congener *A. tragopoginis* L., which I have often found when stripping loose bark from dead standing trunks (but always singly). The latter, moreover, reacts differently to disturbance: instead of taking wing at once and rising into the air, it scurries mouse-like to a new retreat and only eventually, if thwarted in that object, flies off keeping low and fairly straight. Such a difference is in harmony with the general tendency for Noctuids with coloured hindwings to start instantly into flight when disturbed at rest, while their more drab cousins seem to need to “get up steam” before they can take off. (A marked exception is afforded by *Mormo maura* L., which with its very ample wings moves off as swiftly as a *Catocala*.)

In some species, among them the present one — and a host of others in a less pronounced degree — the light-shunning tropism that leads them to pass the day in some dark cranny is evidently so strong as to overcome fully the lamp-seeking one which appears strangely contrary to it, *once the latter is satisfied*. Thus it is, that such moths, entering a lighted room and basking for only a few minutes in the lamp’s rays, set off in a most purposeful manner to explore every nook and corner and finally settle down behind any available cover, such as a screen over a fireplace or against a wall. *M. maura* has even gone further and vanished up the chimney! — A. A. ALLEN, 49, Montcalm Road, London SE7 8QG, 23.xii.74.

RECORDS OF *HYPENA CRASSALIS* FABRICIUS FROM KENT IN 1974. — On the morning of 28th July 1974 I took in my garden trap in Sittingbourne a rather worn female *Hypena crassalis*. Unfortunately, despite making it feel at home by providing it with a healthy bilberry plant, no eggs were deposited.

A few other examples of this moth have recently turned up, one by my colleague Steven Whitebread in a trap at Platt, near Sevenoaks on 22.6.74. This was at a meeting of the Kent Field Club at Mr. McClintock’s house where a trap had been run overnight. *Crassalis* had apparently been discussed prior to the trap being opened since one had previously been taken at Trottiscliffe. It was suggested that this latter moth might have come from the bilberry on Wrotham Heath, only a few miles away. This locality is recorded as possibly the most easterly for bilberry in Kent and could be the breeding site for all these three specimens. Unfortunately, bilberry is now becoming quite scarce in Kent and this is reflected in the increased scarcity of the moth. — DR. I. A. WATKINSON, 2, Fairleas, Sittingbourne, Kent.

PHYLLONORYCTER MESSANIELLA ZELLER: A MASS EMERGENCE. — On the afternoon of Sunday 28th October 1973 I was walking through the National Trust grounds of Clivedon House — the ancestral home of the Aster’s — on the banks of the Thames in Bucks. As usual at that time of the year, I was

constantly on the lookout for *Phyllonorycter* mines. A few mines on hornbeam and elm had been picked when I came across a large holm-oak. This whole tree was infested with *P. messaniella*, each leaf containing on average half a dozen pale blotch mines making it very unsightly. On moving closer I noticed that the tree was alive with myriads of *messaniella* adults flying freely around the branches. There must have been many hundreds, a fascinating sight in the autumn sunshine. Interestingly, none of the nearby normal oaks, some only yards away, sported any such number of mines, although when gathered, *messaniella* did emerge from some of these on the ensuing days.

A curious observation on the holm oak was that not a single pupa case could be seen protruding from any of the mines — a small exit hole being all to show for a vacated mine. The usual habit in this group is for the empty pupa case to protrude for at least a short time until dislodged by tree movement. This was extremely calm weather, however, I assume the coarse texture of the holm-oak leaf prevented egression of the pupa case — DR. I. A. WATKINSON, 2, Fairleas, Sittingbourne, Kent.

THYMELICUS LINEOLA OCHSENHEIMER (ESSEX SKIPPER) IN THE COUNTY OF AVON.—It is worthy of note that this interesting little butterfly is still maintaining a precarious existence in North Somerset, now the new county of Avon.

Turner in "Lepidoptera of Somerset" (1955) records it in the Taunton district "many years ago" (*The Victoria County History of Somerset*), also at Hinton Charterhouse in 1947 and 1952 (J. A. J. Smith). In 1972 I again recorded a small colony in the Hinton Charterhouse/Wellow area. The habitat is a rough hillside pasturage with a good calcareous flora and much rough grass, especially *Phleum pratense* (Cats-tail grass), *Agropyron repens* (Couch), and *Briza media* (Common quaking grass). This small area holds strong colonies of *Erynnis tages* Linn. (Dingy Skipper), *Pyrgus malvae* Linn. (Grizzled Skipper), *Ochlodes venata* Linn. (Large Skipper) and *Thymelicus sylvestris* Poda (Small Skipper), the latter flying with *lineola* and making identification difficult.

I have made extensive searches around Bath over a number of years but this is the only colony which I have been able to locate. Strangely enough, despite the fact that 1973 was an excellent butterfly year, *lineola* was very difficult to find in this area. — BRYAN W. MOORE, Church Cottage, Batheaston, Bath.

STENEPTERYX HIRUNDINIS (L.).—On the 30th of September, I came across a young house martin (*Delichon urbica*) sitting forlornly in the middle of the footway. I picked it up and brought it home, about a quarter of a mile, but it seemed to take no interest in being handled and sat quietly all the time. When I reached home, while showing it to my wife, a specimen of the blood-sucking fly *Stenepteryx hirundinis* (L.) dropped